

Language Levels

As a child develops language for thinking he moves from the concrete ('here and now') to the abstract ('how and why'). To provide a structure to the teaching, the transition from concrete to abstract has been divided into three language levels: A, B and C.

Language Level A

At this level the child begins to listen closely to the language that he hears. The child must start to understand abstract language, including question words: for example, 'What's happening?', 'Who is in the picture?' rather than the more obvious 'What's this?' More abstract questions may also be used but only if directly related to the child's own experiences: for example, 'How did *you* feel?' Here are some examples from this resource:

- Who went swimming?
- What were Lisa and Jane talking about?
- Tell me some things you could write with.

Language Level B

Here the child is required to manipulate what he sees and hears and starts to think more deeply: 'How do others feel?', 'What could others say?', 'What will happen next?', 'What is the cause of ...?' Thus the child begins to draw on his world knowledge and experience, to 'read between the lines' and to make some inferences. The conclusions he is expected to make are still generally obvious. Here are some examples from this resource:

- Tell me how the children planted the seeds
- What is a dice?
- What is something you shouldn't do with a book?

Language Level C

This, the most abstract level, requires the child to analyse, explain and reason. The key question at this level is 'Why?' For example, 'Why will X happen?', 'Why shouldn't...?' The child is also expected to talk about a variety of possible outcomes that may not be immediately obvious (such as 'What would she do if ...?') as well as reflect on his own understanding (for example, 'How can you tell?'). Here are some examples from this resource:

- How do you know how old Caroline is?
- What is the same about grandmothers and grandfathers?
- If Jamal didn't have a tray what could he do?

Monitoring Progress

Assessment

There are three parallel assessment scenarios. Use the first one to determine where to start. The other assessments are used for monitoring progress. The assessments are most appropriate for use with individuals and small groups.

These assessments are working tools and not formal tests. They aim to give guidance about where to start with a child and monitor progress. They do rely on subjective judgement to some extent. However, you should aim to be consistent with your scoring. Refer frequently to the scoring guides, which are given in Tables 3 and 4 and repeated at the back of this book.

In advance of the session

- Select one assessment that has not been used with the child before (if all three have been used, reuse the first assessment).
- Photocopy the Assessment Record Sheet.
- Add the date and the child's name to the Assessment Record Sheet.
- Select which module you will be assessing. The modules should be carried out in sequential order starting with Module 1.

With the child

- Work with one child at a time in a quiet setting.
- If time permits you may wish to tape the session and then transcribe it.
- Follow the guidelines relevant to each module as outlined below:

Module 1 (Picture and Talk)

Show the child the picture and read the accompanying story before commencing the questions.

Module 2 (Picture and Text)

Show the child the picture and ask him to read the accompanying story before commencing the questions. The support provided with reading should be minimal.

Module 3 (Text)

Do *not* show the child the picture, but ask him to read the story before commencing the questions. The support provided with reading should be minimal.

- Rereading the story is permitted, but should be recorded on the Assessment Record Sheet.
- Ask all the questions on the Assessment Record Sheet in the given order.
- Record the child's answers exactly as he says them.

- Use minimal prompts and mark the Assessment Record Sheet with a 'P'. For example, if the child points, prompt him 'Can you tell me in words?'
- Be generally encouraging and accepting of the child's answers.
- Repeating questions is permitted, but should be recorded on the Assessment Record Sheet with an 'R'.

Afterwards

- Score the child's answers using the method below. Add the score in the unshaded boxes.
- Add up the scores for each language level.
- Allocate starting level (see 'Knowing where to start', page 16).

Scoring the Assessment

The scoring system is based on the method used by Blank et al (2003). Score the assessment following the steps below.

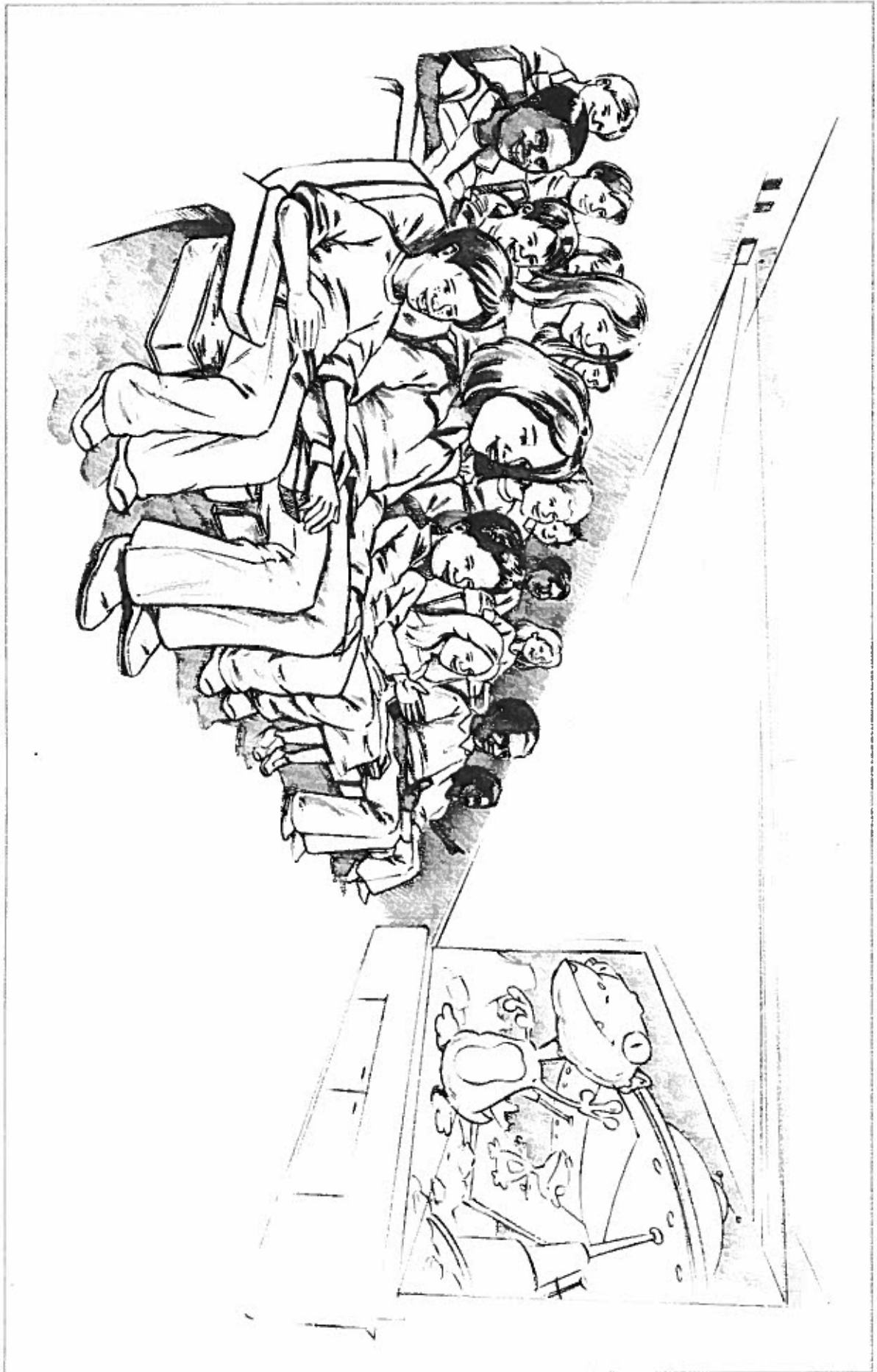
- 1 Allocate points to each answer using the guidelines below.

TABLE 3 Scoring a child's response

3 points	The student has understood the question and has given a relevant and appropriate answer. The answer is accurate and does not require the listener to interpret further. There may be minor grammatical errors but these do not affect the meaning conveyed.
2 points	The student's response gives a clear indication that he has understood the question. The response is plausible but it requires the listener to interpret a little. Grammatical errors may mildly affect the meaning conveyed.
1 point	The student's response shows possible understanding of the question. The answer has some relation to the question but is ambiguous. The listener needs to interpret the child's answer. A child can score a maximum of 1 if he points without speaking.
0 points	Here the answer is incorrect, inaccurate, tangential to the question or no response is given.

For ease of reference Table 3 is reproduced at the back of this book (see page 191).

See examples on pages 184 to 189.



Assessment Record Sheet: Cinema

Name Assessor

Date Module 1 (Picture and Talk) Module 2 (Picture and Text) Module 3 (Text)

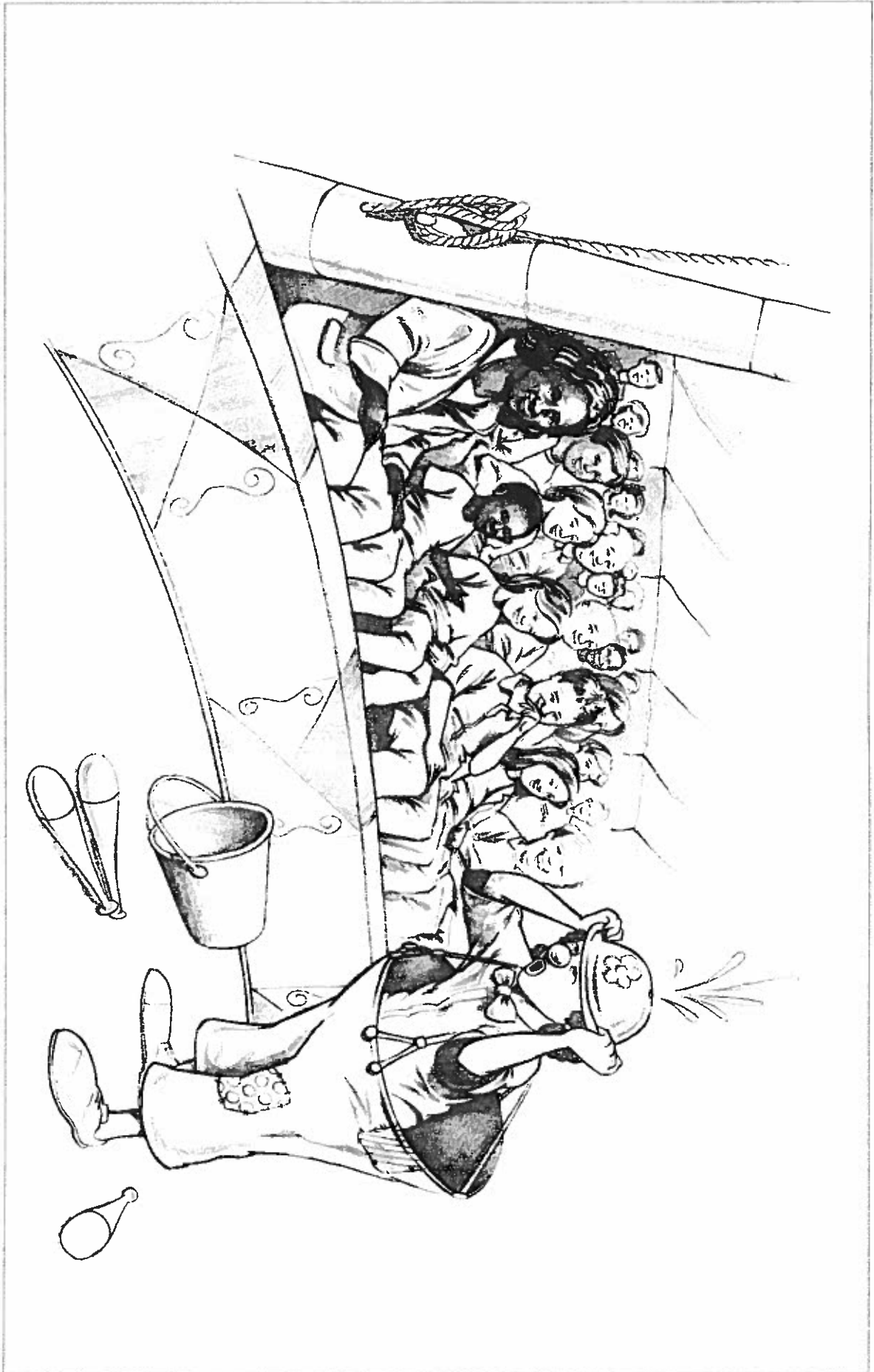
Module (Delete as appropriate)

On Saturday John went to the cinema. John was excited. John went with his mum. John's mum bought the tickets. They went and found their seats. There were lots of other people there too. Everyone laughed at the film about aliens.

Question	Child's Answer	Language Level		
		A	B	C
1 Tell me what happened in this story.				
2 Where are John and his mum?				
3 Who went with his mum?				
4 Who is in the film?				
5 When did John go to the cinema?				
6 Finish this: 'John felt very ...'				
7 Do they like the film? (Not scored.) Why do they like it?				
8 How do you know they like it?				
Language level sub-total carried forward				

Assessment Record Sheet: Cinema

Question	Child's Answer	Language Level		
		A	B	C
9 What are the children looking at?				
10 What's the difference between an alien and a dog?				
11 What is a cinema?				
12 Which is better, TV or cinema? (<i>Not scored.</i>) Why?				
13 What is John sitting on?				
14 Why shouldn't John stand up when the film is on?				
15 John is hungry. What could he say?				
16 John doesn't have enough money to buy popcorn. What could he do?				
17 Tell me how you buy a ticket for the cinema.				
18 What will happen after the film has finished?				
Language level sub-total				
Total score				
Start language level (see scoring on page 191)				



Assessment Record Sheet: Circus

Name		Date		Assessor	
Module <small>(delete as appropriate)</small>	Module 1 (Picture and Talk)	Module 2 (Picture and Text)	Module 3 (Text)		

On Saturday Tayo went to the circus. Tayo was excited. Tayo went with his mum. Tayo's mum bought the tickets. They went and found their seats. There were lots of other people there too. Everyone laughed at the clowns in the circus.

	Language Level		
Question	A	B	C
1 Tell me what happened in this story.			
2 Where are Tayo and his mum?			
3 Who went with his mum?			
4 Who is in the circus?			
5 When did Tayo go to the circus?			
6 Finish this: 'Tayo felt very ...'			
7 Do they like the circus? (<i>Not scored</i>) Why do they like it?			
8 How do you know they like it?			
Language level sub-total carried forward			

Assessment Record Sheet: Circus

Question	Child's Answer	Language Level		
		A	B	C
9 What are the children looking at?				
10 What's the difference between a clown and a dog?				
11 What is a circus?				
12 Which is better, TV or a circus? (Not scored.) Why?				
13 What is Tayo sitting on?				
14 Why shouldn't Tayo stand up when the show is on?				
15 Tayo is hungry. What could he say?				
16 Tayo doesn't have enough money to buy popcorn. What could he do?				
17 Tell me how you buy a ticket for the circus.				
18 What will happen after the circus has finished?				
		Language level sub-total		
		Total score		
		Start language level (see scoring on page 191)		



Assessment Record Sheet: Puppet Show

Name		Date		Assessor	
Module <small>(Delete as appropriate)</small>	Module 1 (Picture and Talk)	Module 2 (Picture and Text)	Module 3 (Text)		

On Saturday Tayo went to the circus. Tayo was excited. Tayo went with his mum. Tayo's mum bought the tickets. They went and found their seats. There were lots of other people there too. Everyone laughed at the clowns in the circus.

Question	Child's Answer	Language Level		
		A	B	C
1 Tell me what happened in this story.				
2 Where are Ahmed and his mum?				
3 Who went with his mum?				
4 Who is in the puppet show?				
5 When did Ahmed go to the puppet show?				
6 Finish this: 'Ahmed felt very ...'				
7 Do they like the puppet show? <i>(Not scored.)</i> Why do they like it?				
8 How do you know they like it?				
Language level sub-total carried forward				

Assessment Record Sheet: Puppet Show

Question	Child's Answer	Language Level		
		A	B	C
Language level sub-total brought forward				
9 What are the children looking at?				
10 What's the difference between a puppet and a dog?				
11 What is a puppet show?				
12 Which is better, TV or a puppet show? (<i>Not scored.</i>)				
13 What is Ahmed sitting on?				
14 Why shouldn't Ahmed stand up when the show is on?				
15 Ahmed is hungry. What could he say?				
16 Ahmed doesn't have enough money to buy popcorn. What could he do?				
17 Tell me how you buy a ticket for the puppet show.				
18 What will happen after the puppet show has finished?				
		Language level sub-total		
		Total score		
		Start language level <small>(see scoring on page 191)</small>		

Assessment Text for Children to Read in Modules 2 and 3

Please photocopy and cut up.



Cinema

On Saturday John went to the cinema.

John was excited.

John went with his mum.

John's mum bought the tickets.

They went and found their seats.

There were lots of other people there too.

Everyone laughed at the film about aliens.



Circus

On Saturday Tayo went to the circus.

Tayo was excited.

Tayo went with his mum.

Tayo's mum bought the tickets.

They went and found their seats.

There were lots of other people there too.

Everyone laughed at the clowns in the circus.



Puppet show

On Saturday Ahmed went to a puppet show.

Ahmed was excited.

Ahmed went with his mum.

Ahmed's mum bought the tickets.

They went and found their seats.

There were lots of other people there too.

Everyone laughed at the animal puppets.